Sl. No.	Bank	Branches fully Computerised	No. of Branches Partially Computerised
16.	UCO Bank	18	200
17.	Union Bank of India	61	402
18.	United Bank of India	12	92
19.	Vijaya Bank	80	77

(b) and (c) Computerisation in the banking industry is not only for the purpose of reducing the possibilities of corruption but also for the purposes of enhancing the efficiency of banks and providing better customer service. The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) have issued instructions in exercise of the power conferred on the CVC by Section 8(1)(h) of the Central Vigilance Commission ordinance 1998 that all banks must ensure that 70% of their business is captured through computerisation before 01.01.2001.

Merger of Public Sector Banks

1728. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item, which appeared in 'The Statesman' dated the 15th September, 1998 wherein the Chairman of Indian Banks Association has stated that there is no need to keep 29 public sector banks and some of these should be merged; and

(b) if so, what is Governmet's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is no proposal at present to merge public sector banks.

Reports of the NCAER

1729. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: SHRI C.O. POULOSE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reports of the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) released in the 2nd week of August, '98 which warned Government that in near future there would be no industrial recovery, foreign inflows would fall by as much as one billion dollars, interest rates and inflation would rise and the rupee would sink to 44 to the dollar; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) A report entitled "Review of the Economy" brought out by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in Septemeber, 1998 has high-lighted the trends of major macro economic variables in the Indian Economy in 1998-99. The report indicated that there is a slump in the foreign direct investment inflows and slowdown in industrial growth in the first quarter of 1998-99. It further mentioned that interest rates may harden, inflation rate picked up momentum since April, 1998, and rupee depreciated by about 12 per cent during the first quarter of 1998-99.

(b) Views of research institutions and professional organisations involved in